

Theme: Daniel was given a vision of two future kingdoms and an evil ruler who will desecrate God's Temple and persecute God's people, but he saw God intervene to destroy the persecutor and deliver His people, for the Sovereign God rules over the kingdoms of mankind.

I. Intro - Alexander Weeping

- A. Hans Gruber - Alexander wept for there were no more worlds to conquer.
- B. It is reported that King Alexander the Great, hearing Anaxarchus the philosopher discoursing and maintaining this position: That there were worlds innumerable: fell a-weeping: and when his friends and familiars about him asked what he ailed. Have I not (quoth he) good cause to weep, that being as there are an infinite number of worlds, I am not yet the lord of one? - Plutarch's Lives of Alexander
- C. Alexander did conquer much of our world
- D. Yet his meteoric rise and fall were prophesied by Daniel over 200 years prior!
- E. Today - History and the Word of the Sovereign God

II. A Vision of A Ram and A Goat

- A. Daniel's vision of the ram
In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. ² In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. ³ I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. ⁴ I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great. Daniel 8:1-4

- 1. Another vision, two years later than Daniel 7 vision
- 2. Interesting he is taken to Susa - royal residence for later Persian kings, and Nehemiah & Esther
- 3. A ram with two horns, one is larger but grew later
- 4. This represents the Medo-Persian empire
I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. Daniel 8:3

The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. Daniel 8:20
 - a. Originally Media was the senior part of the empire.
 - b. Cyrus, who was both a Mede and a Persian, started his reign as a vassal of the Medes, but in this very year, he rebelled and defeated the Medes and Persia led the Empire.
- 5. The fast rise of the Persian empire under Cyrus
I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great. Daniel 8:4
 - a. Cyrus quickly conquered Babylon, Syria
 - b. The largest empire the world had known until then
 - c. Persia seemed invisible for about 200 years

- B. Daniel's vision of the goat
As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. ⁶ He came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great

rage. ⁷ I saw him attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering his two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against him; the goat knocked him to the ground and trampled on him, and none could rescue the ram from his power. Daniel 8:5–7

1. Suddenly, a goat with one huge horn comes quickly and attacks and tramples the ram (Persia)
2. This is shocking - the great Ram Persia is quickly defeated and trampled!
3. This refers to Alexander the Great
The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. Daniel 8:21
 - a. Alexander was born in 356; became king in 336 BC
 - b. He invades Persia, defeats a much larger army at Granicus in May 334 BC
 - c. Wins again at Issus in November 333, and then crushes them in October 331 at Gaugamela
 - d. It took less than 3 years to completely conquer Persia - unimaginable, but it happened!
 - e. Daniel predicted this 200 years before it happened!
4. Alexander's great kingdom - and sudden fall
The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven... ²² The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. Daniel 8:8, 22
 - a. Alexander conquered Persia - and kept going until he reached India!

- b. Eventually, his army was sick of constantly conquering more lands and wanted to return home
 - c. On June 13, 323 BC Alexander died of a fever in Babylon (possibly malaria) - only 33 years old!
 - d. Alexander had a son about to be born and a half-brother, but both were eventually murdered, and after decades of conflict, the empire was split into 4 parts.
 - e. The four kingdoms were great - but not nearly as large or powerful as Alexander and his kingdom
 - f. Again, God's Word declared this over 200 years before it happened!
- C. Daniel's vision in chapter 8 is of the two great empires that would come after Babylon - the Persians and the Greeks. It accurately predicted their rise and swift fall at the height of their power.

III. Another Little Horn Persecutes God's People

- A. Another little horn arises and grows
Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land... ²³ "In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. Daniel 8:9, 23
1. A little horn arises from one of the four horns and grows, conquering many lands, including Israel (v9)
 2. This king will be harsh and arise and operate by intrigue (v23)
 - a. This refers to Antiochus Epiphanes
 - b. He was not in the line of succession but through political manipulation, intrigue, and murder he became king around 175BC and then aggressively began to expand his kingdom

- c. Daniel 10 and 11 give even more information on his military campaigns and interactions with Rome (the 4th beast who has arisen by this time)

B. The horrible actions of Antiochus Epiphanes

It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. ¹¹ It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. ¹² Because of rebellion, the host [of the saints] and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground. Daniel 8:10–12

1. As he grew in power, Antiochus tried to make Jews forsake Yahweh and worship Greek gods, even destroying copies of Torah and killing those who possessed it or refused to forsake Yahweh.
2. He eventually forced them to stop the daily sacrifices in the Temple
3. 2 Maccabees 5:11-14 says he slaughtered 80,000 men, women, and children, and in 167BC built an altar to Zeus and offered a pig on it - desecrating the Temple
4. This persecution lasted from 170-163 BC, and the Temple was desecrated for about 3.5 years.
Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, “How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled — the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?” ¹⁴ He said to me, “It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.” Daniel 8:13–14
 - a. This time would last 2,300 morning and evenings

- b. This could be 1,150 days of morning and evening sacrifices
 1. This would be 3 years and 2 months
 2. The Temple was desecrated so no offering could be made for just under 1150 days, but he may have stopped the sacrifices a bit earlier.
- c. This could be 2,300 days of persecution and desecration
 1. This would be a bit over 6 years
 2. He began his actions in 170 BC, and it would be 2,300 days later when the Temple was rededicated.
- d. Either could be true, and the point is that this brutal persecution and desecration would be limited in time

C. The spiritual nature of Antiochus' actions

It grew **until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them.** ¹¹ It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low... ²⁴ He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. **He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people.** Daniel 8:10–11, 24

1. He threw down the starry host (God's people)
 - a. Note in v24 it is the mighty ones and holy people
 - b. Similar language is used in Daniel 12:3
Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.
Daniel 12:3 (also see Philippians 2:15)
 - c. This is based on God's promise to Abraham that his seed would be like the stars (Genesis 15:5; 22:17)

- d. Once again - DO NOT READ APOCALYPTIC LITERALLY - HERE OR ELSEWHERE!!! (The moon will not be turned to blood, stars will not fall from the sky to the earth, etc. - IT IS FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE!!) - **AFTER HOURS**
- e. But this language shows the struggle here is not really political but spiritual, and of cosmic significance

2. He is set against God Himself

It set itself up **to be as great as the Prince of the host**; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low... ²⁵ He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and **take his stand against the Prince of princes**. Daniel 8:11, 25

- a. Antiochus wanted everyone to worship Greek gods
- b. Thus, his fight was actually against Yahweh

3. He was empowered by Satan

He will become very strong, **but not by his own power**. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. Daniel 8:24

- a. Not by his own power - empowered by Satan
- b. This is likely the meaning given the spiritual context of throwing down the stars, fighting against God, and his seeming supernatural strength.
- c. We will see more about the spiritual nature of this conflict in the coming weeks

D. The end of Antiochus

Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.
Daniel 8:25

1. Antiochus laid siege to a city but lost
2. He then heard that a Jewish army had routed his army in Palestine
3. In 163 Antiochus died, apparently from grief and sickness rather than in battle.
4. The little horn was judged for his wicked actions against God and His people - exactly as had been prophesied by Daniel almost 400 years prior!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Reiteration of persecution, God's Sovereignty

1. This chapter teaches us about the persecution of God's people and the Sovereignty of God again
2. We will see these themes through all of Daniel
3. They are key themes and are repeated so often because they are essential for us to understand!

B. Do I see the accuracy and authority of God's Word?

1. This chapter is full of proof of the truth and power of God's Word
2. Daniel prophesied these things hundreds of years in advance - and they all came true!
3. They are so accurate that unbelieving scholars say they must have been written after the events - even though all the evidence goes against this!
4. This reminds us that God's Word is true in all it teaches!
5. This reminds us God's Word is powerful - Alexander or Antiochus can be gone in the blink of an eye!

6. This reminds us that empires rise and fall, but the Word of God endures forever! Heaven and earth will pass away, but God's Word is firm forever!
7. This reminds us to trust God for the things not yet fulfilled - they will come to pass!
8. Stand firm through all trials - for God's Word is true and He will do all He has promised!

C. The Table - Word and Sacrament

1. The kingdom grows by Word and sacrament!
2. Too many today trust in hype, marketing, business principles, etc - but God works by Word & sacrament!
3. This Table reminds us of God's faithful work in the past
4. This Table points us to our future inheritance!
5. A call to faith in Christ

History and the Word of the Sovereign God

Daniel 8
October 3, 2021
Communion
Acts 20:32

Teaching keywords: Sovereignty of God; Word of God; persecuted church; prophecy (Old Testament)

Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Acts 20:32

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¹³ Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, “How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled — the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?” ¹⁴ He said to me, “It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.” ¹⁵ While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. ¹⁶ And I heard a man’s voice from the Ulai calling, “Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision.”

¹⁷ As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. “Son of man,” he said to me, “understand that the vision concerns the time of the end.” ¹⁸ While he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Then he touched me and raised me to my feet. ¹⁹ He said: “I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end. ²⁰ The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹ The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king.

²² The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. ²³ “In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. ²⁴ He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people.

²⁵ He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power. ²⁶ “The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.” ²⁷ I, Daniel, was exhausted and lay ill for several days. Then I got up and went about the king’s business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding. Dan 8:1–27